

Combining Conservation and Care: Incorporating Gender into Population Environment Projects



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INTRODUCTION

The Population Environment (PE) program of Conservation International (CI) recognizes the importance of incorporating gender roles and responsibilities into activities to improve conservation in key biodiversity areas around the world.

In biodiversity hotspots and wilderness areas worldwide, women and men have different gender-based roles and responsibilities in their lives, families, households, communities, societies, and nations. They have different knowledge of, access to, and control over natural resources and different opportunities to participate in decisions that directly and indirectly affect biodiversity. They are also affected differently by environmental and climatic change. (Boender forthcoming)

The purpose of this paper is to show how the PE program has incorporated gender analysis and training into activities and to share our lessons learned on incorporating gender to improve conservation outcomes. There are many ways in which gender-based differences are important to the success of conservation, and project results suggest that certain improvements in gender equity may lead to improved conservation results. By definition, gender is the economic, social, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female. Gender relates to the socially constructed differences and relations between men and women within a given context (IGWG 2003).



Men and women have different gender-based roles and responsibilities in their lives, families, households and communities.

Training in Gender Analysis and Incorporation of Gender



Lack of existing data on gender differences in conservation limits possible response options.

Recognizing that incorporating gender into conservation strategy planning is critical to ensuring sustainable successes, CI's PE program sponsored a six-day Strategy Development and Gender Integration Workshop in the Philippines in June, 2004. The workshop was also sponsored by the US Agency for International Development's Office of Women in Development, which provided experienced gender trainers through its contract with DevTech Systems Inc. and partner organizations. The workshop included 12 women and 13 men from Cambodia, Guatemala, Mexico, Madagascar, and the Philippines.

The workshop brought together PE staff members and partners to share lessons learned in integrated program implementation and monitoring, to demonstrate success stories in the field, and to foster cross-team collaboration and capacity building. The gender portion of the training increased participant knowledge and awareness of gender concepts, of how gender relations affect the achievement of results in conservation and reproductive health and development, and how such interventions can improve gender outcomes. In addition, participants increased their skills in incorporating gender issues into program design, implementation, monitoring, and analysis of CI's conservation objectives in the PE projects. The participants were specialists in reproductive health, rural development, community-based development, and resource management, and in general, they had very limited experience with analyzing gender roles and responsibilities.

During the course of the workshop, PE staff members and partners worked in country teams to refine project objectives and expected results to better target gender roles in resource conservation—particularly access to resources, knowledge, and management and use of biodiversity, such as plants and water. Trainers used the Gender Framework, which covers six analysis domains, including access to resources; space and time; legal rights and status; knowledge, beliefs, and perceptions; practices and participation; and power. Several groups did find it difficult to absorb and apply each domain to their programs.

The following examples illustrate gender aspects of conservation and CI's responses to incorporate gender.

Women's Participation in Guatemala

Around 2000, CI began implementing a PE project centered on training local midwives in family planning and reducing pressure on natural resources in the Petén. One of the project objectives was to support development of community groups in health and environment, but a constraint to women's participation was that often women were confined to the home and did not use public spaces. In addition, women were not accustomed to working with other women outside their families. This barrier limited their participation in community groups. In response to these challenges, CI and our partners began to educate project staff members about the importance of involving women in decisionmaking and community-based group activities.



Mexico staff work to integrate gender in health and conservation activities.

Gender Aspects of Water Use in Southern Mexico

Supported by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, CI's Meeting Population and Conservation Needs in the Selva Lacandona project implements an environmental education component in order to raise awareness among youth about the importance of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of resources. The education component focused on prevention of forest fires, which are the main threat to biodiversity in the jungle. While debating the gender aspects of this component, CI staff members and our partners began to consider gender roles in people's use of water in the area.

Project staff members perceived that men in the area are generally not involved in gathering, carrying, or providing water for household use and therefore do not appreciate its importance. On the basis of a preliminary review of existing information on differences in water use by men, women, and children, CI decided to highlight the links between the different ways men and women use water, specifically looking at the health impacts on family members, such as childhood morbidity from acute diarrheal disease. Consequently, CI's partner, the Mexican Social Security Institute, was asked

to track diarrheal episodes by gender and to compile regular reports. These reports are helping to provide important information to community-based health professionals about water-related illnesses and to enable analysis of patterns of illness by gender.

In addition, project staff members developed an awareness-raising campaign and a series of educational activities with adolescent leaders (boys and girls) on water use (domestic and reproductive uses) through a partner organization, the Centers for Rural Adolescents. The project's environmental education component targeted youth because of the great potential for adolescents to act as leaders in behavior change communication and adoption.

Gender and Community Planning in Decisionmaking in Cambodia

CI Cambodia works with local communities to plan their conservation and health priorities in a sustainable manner. One of the goals of the project is to facilitate the integration of reproductive health and family planning (RH/FP), conservation, and gender concerns into Commune Development Plans, in consultation with women's associations (WAs). To better understand local problems, livelihoods, priorities, resource uses, and other concerns from a gender perspective, CI and our partners began to ask questions about the structure and participation of the members of the commune



Training midwives in the Philippines.



Malagasy midwives preparing educational materials.

councils and to examine the decisionmaking process through a gender lens.

The project identified several gender-based constraints, such as the fact that men are traditionally the primary decisionmakers in the households and in public affairs; women's organizations did not exist; and women have the responsibility to care for children, making it harder for them to leave home and participate. In response to these constraints, CI redesigned our livelihood activities to create WAs in each village and to use the WAs as "entry points" for environment education, children's clubs, health education, and awareness building. Working with a small Cambodian nongovernmental organization, Save Cambodia's Wildlife (SCW), CI and local communities worked closely to design a collaborative workplan for health and conservation education and information, education and communication (IEC), coupled with practical livelihood development activities. Supported by the local chief of the Women's Affairs Agency in the Cardamoms Conservation Landscape, SCW completed a gender and

feasibility assessment in the fall of 2004 and crafted pilot livelihood activities in the spring of 2005. These activities include home gardening and cash crop production, such as ginger and chili, as well as livestock projects involving pigs and buffalo. These efforts have raised community awareness of gender roles in conservation friendly enterprises and helped meet community needs.

NEXT STEPS IN INTEGRATING GENDER INTO CONSERVATION

One of the important lessons learned from the gender analyses conducted by the country project teams was that the lack of existing data on gender differences in conservation limited the possible response options. Perceptions varied among staff members as to the roles of men and women in water use in Mexico, in family planning decision-making in the Philippines, and in reproductive health access in Madagascar. In the absence of baseline survey data and gender-sensitive indicators, interventions may not achieve intended results. This finding led the PE project to implement two follow-up activities:

- Follow-up training in specific countries.
- Collaboration with the MEASURE/Evaluation project, funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), to construct a monitoring and evaluation framework for Cambodia that included gender-specific indicators.

Follow-up Trainings

Following the workshop, CI strengthened the field-level implementation of the PE program activities in two countries: Mexico and the Philippines. Both programs focused on improving CI staff member and partner knowledge and skills in addressing men's and women's roles in conservation through targeted gender trainings. This effort greatly enhances the implementation and resulting impacts of our PE programs.

In Chiapas, Mexico, CI conducted workshops on gender awareness for the medical health units or unidades médicas rurales (UMRs) in the Selva and Fronteriza zones of the Selva Lacandona jungle. A UMR is a group of doctors that administers RH/FP services and educates inhabitants of this key biodiversity area about the links between their health

and the environment. Through the workshops, CI workers determined what gender perceptions existed among the doctors and nurses that hindered their efforts to educate and treat the people of the region. CI then created strategies to correct those issues to ensure the long-term success of CI's programs there.

In Baggao, Cayan province of the Philippines, a communication and awareness project mobilized educators and local leaders to educate community members about how biodiversity conservation is integrally connected to gender and RH/FP. CI received an anonymous donation that allowed project staff members to hold forums and "teach-ins" for two months and provide local teachers with the necessary knowledge and the orientation to spread this knowledge. In addition, CI purchased six months of weekly radio program time, disseminating information to the public about population and environment issues, including the role of gender in conservation.

Collaboration with MEASURE/Evaluation

Following the June 2004 PE workshop, USAID/Washington requested technical assistance in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) from the MEASURE/Evaluation project. MEASURE/Evaluation has more than ten years of experience



CI staff and partners in the Philippines.

compiling health indicators and is interested in expanding into PE. The CI Cambodia PE project received technical guidance and capacity-building assistance from the MEASURE/Evaluation project in the areas of M&E, data collection, and analysis in January 2004. MEASURE/Evaluation



Men and women have different roles in natural resource management across different societies.



Preparing for a meeting in Cambodia's CCL.

staff members traveled to Cambodia to assist CI Cambodia's PE staff in the development of an M&E plan, including a results framework, data collection and an evaluation protocol, as well as a detailed description of indicators, including data sources, targets, and justification.



PROCESS-Luzon training involves men and women in health education techniques for couples counseling in the Philippines.

The MEASURE/Evaluation team worked closely with CI staff members and our partners to produce a workable, realistic M&E plan, which was based on site visits to the Thma Bang commune in the Central Cardamoms Protected Forest. The team visited the health post managed by the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE) as part of the CI Cambodia PE project; a Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP) meeting in Tatai Leu; and a meeting of a women's group coordinated through CI's other cooperating partner, SCW. These activities were integral to understanding the way partners worked together, the data flow and possible data collection mechanisms already in place, and the potential obstacles for CI in collecting the necessary data for reporting to USAID. The framework has been vetted with partners, and they are collecting preliminary data.

The M&E plan contained several gender-specific indicators, such as the percentage of women with access to family planning, the percentage of women participating in PLUP or commune meetings, and the percentage of men and women exposed to IEC materials. Implementation of the plan assumes there will be a baseline Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) survey in the target zone in order to measure improvements in project outcomes. Once the KAP survey is completed, CI and our partners will coordinate data analysis and interpretation and use the results to refine on-the-ground activities.

LESSONS LEARNED

CI and our partners have found the following in our work on incorporating gender into conservation and health activities:

- Gender analysis takes time and resources. The concepts can be challenging in different cultural contexts, because the gender concepts are quite advanced and nuanced linguistically. Thus, gender analysis can pose challenges for many of the field staff members and it takes time to acquire solid understanding of the definitions and ideas.
- To ensure that gender analysis and strategies are effective, projects need to have solid M&E plans and data collection systems in place.
- Project staff members need information on local initiatives to incorporate gender and coordinate with other national- or regional-scale efforts, and they need to know whether there are potential resources for capacity building assistance at those levels.



Midwives at a health training in the Philippines.

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Cambodian men and women review SCW's educational materials.

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